



MEMA REPORTS

MEMA REPORTS is a monthly newsletter produced by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to help keep the Public Safety Community of Massachusetts better informed about the day's Emergency Management issues. MEMA REPORTS also appears on the MEMA website: www.mass.gov/mema.

March 9, 2012

Volume 11, Issue 2

MEMA HELPS TO RESTORE COMMUNICATIONS IN HUNTINGTON

MEMA was called upon to respond to the Town of Huntington on February 18th due to a major communications failure of their landline and cellular phones due to a motor vehicle crash into a utility pole adjacent to the Verizon central office. This caused a major trunk line to be cut and pulled from the building. As a result, the town was without the ability to make or accept emergency calls, including 9-1-1. MEMA immediately responded with a Field Support Unit (FSU) and a Communications Unit Leader (COML). This provided the Police, Fire, and Emergency Management officials with a cellular and a satellite phone for emergency coordination. In addition, MEMA requested the MA State Police Command Post (CP2) and satellite phone switch/trailer for additional capacity. An Area Command Post was established at the DPW yard using the Command Post and DPW garage. A combination of sign boards (from the Western MA Homeland Security Council) and news media outlets provided the public with key information about the Command Center that was established. To the end, MEMA was able to provide both satellite phone and computer capabilities for key decision makers for a total of two days at which point all services were restored.

MEMA COMMO ALSO AIDS HUBBARDSTON

On February 25th, MEMA was called upon for communications support for the Town Hubbardston for a collapse of their antenna tower at the Fire Station impacting vital Public Safety communications for the community. MEMA was able to coordinate a response with the MA State Police Troop C Radio Shop and the Central Mass Homeland Security Council. MA State Police provided a Communications Technician (COMT) and spare equipment, while the Worcester Emergency Management Director David Clemons, representing the Council, provided a 100' tower trailer. Once the situation was evaluated, a temporary antenna and cable was installed on the Fire Station roof and communications was restored for the short term. The town's radio vendor was called for a long term repair of both tower and antennas.

WebEOC UPGRADED

Six months ago MEMA began a project to upgrade the software and hardware for WebEOC, their web-enabled crisis information management system that provides real-time information sharing. The upgrade was to improve system performance and to make WebEOC a more usable tool for all stakeholders. The project consisted of two phases. Phase 1 consisted of upgrading the software and hardware. In Phase 2, MEMA will redesign or build new boards to better meet operational needs. Phase 1 is now complete and MEMA is moving forward into Phase 2. Phase 1 involved installing new servers at the Chelsea data center and installing the latest version of WebEOC (v7.4) on the servers. The servers now reside in a secure environment that has been hardened to external internet traffic.

The data center also provides MEMA with access to greater bandwidth, 24-hour support, and faster data access capabilities.

On February 28th, many local Emergency Management Directors helped MEMA 'stress test' the new hardware and software. The test was very successful, in that the new system was stressed harder, handling more traffic, than the past two disasters stressed the previous system. The investment in new servers, moving to the state's data center and expanding the data pipelines have paid off with a more robust and reliable WebEOC.

MEMA went live with the latest version of WebEOC (7.4) on Monday, March 5th. WebEOC users can access the updated version via MEMA's website (www.mass.gov/mema). The link to WebEOC is on the top right side of our homepage under OnLine Services, WebEOC Login. Or, you can access MEMA's WebEOC at: <https://webeoc.chs.state.ma.us/eoc7/> (you may want to bookmark the URL on your browser). It is highly recommend that all WebEOC users verify their access to the updated WebEOC by logging in using their current username and password. If you have trouble logging in or navigating the system, please contact your MEMA Regional office.

STATEWIDE HURRICANE CONFERENCE

Save the Date! Statewide Hurricane Conference. When: May 9, 2012 - Where: Devens Common Center, Devens, MA - Time: 8:00am-5:00pm. This conference will provide participants an educational opportunity to learn about various hurricane preparedness topics as we prepare to enter the 2012 Hurricane Season. Guest speakers are expected from the following agencies: the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Florida, the National Weather Service, FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers. This conference will allow participants to share ideas and gain knowledge through a series of break-out workshops, presentations, and panel discussions. More details and registration information will be forthcoming.

MOBILE-EAS DEMONSTRATION

On March 5th, MEMA took part in a demonstration of an important next-generation technology for alerting the public during natural and other emergencies at WGBH studios in Brighton, The Mobile Emergency Alert System (M-EAS) is being pioneered by WGBH with PBS, LG Electronics and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). The system combines the immediacy and reach of broadcasting with personal mobile devices. Mobile EAS is designed to provide vital emergency information, whether for a national emergency, storm warning, or missing children, by delivering video, audio, maps, photos and text directly to any individual's mobile device, phone, tablet or laptop using a mobile digital TV broadcast. M-EAS will work with existing alert systems as well as new text-based systems planned by mobile carriers. But it enhances these systems by providing rich-media content, such as video, instantly, and it avoids the congestion that cellular networks experience in emergencies. MA is one of just three states testing the service and working to develop a template for a national system for all broadcasters, public and commercial.

CYBER SECURITY

The Department of Homeland Security's National Cyber Security Division is providing cyber security tips as part of its cyber risk management program. There are many simple things businesses, schools, and home users can do to keep their systems and private information secure. Please visit the link below to learn more about online privacy, gaming tips for kids, internet safety for college students, mobile computing safety and social networking tips: <http://staysafeonline.org/cybersecurity-awareness-month/ncsam-tip-sheets>.

ESSENTIALS OF COMMUNITY CYBER SECURITY & THE EOC'S ROLE

The *Essentials of Community Cyber Security and the EOC'S Role in Cyber Security* course, provided by the MEMA Training Department, occurred on February 28-March 1st in Framingham at MEMA HQ. 24 participants from various state agencies attended. The purpose of this course was to gain

knowledge around cyber events and their impacts as well as the roles and responsibilities needed to detect, prevent and respond to a cyber incident effectively.

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP IN HOMELAND SECURITY

The *Collaborative Leadership in Homeland Security* course commenced on February 12th. This five week online simulation/classroom combined course is sponsored by MEMA and the DelValle Institute in Boston, provided by the University of Connecticut through FEMA/DHS. The one week face-to-face component is being conducted in Quincy. The purpose of this course is to equip Homeland Security leaders with critical thinking skills and collaborative leadership abilities in order to make effective strategic planning and management decisions on Homeland Security related issues. 27 students from all levels of government participated. The program will conclude on March 22nd.

TSUNAMI EXERCISE

On March 28th, the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program will be conducting an exercise to assist tsunami preparedness efforts along the US and Canadian East Coasts, the Gulf of Mexico, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The exercise consists of two separate scenarios: 1) a Gulf of Mexico earthquake west of Florida, which generates a tsunami by triggering by a submarine slump on the continental slopes. 2) An earthquake located east of South Carolina generating a tsunami by triggering a slump along the continental slump further to the east. MEMA plans on utilizing the exercise as a notification and information-sharing opportunity.

FEBRUARY TRAINING

During this past month, an additional 214 individuals received training through MEMA in the following subject areas *ICS-100/NIMS-700, ICS-300, ICS-400, Resource Management System (RMS) Basic, RMS Administrator, Small Animal Handling & Awareness, and Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP)*. For additional information regarding MEMA Training and future classes, go to www.mass.gov/mema.

FEBRUARY MEMT MEETING

The February Meeting of the MA Emergency Management Team (MEMT) was an annual Overview of Winter Weather and Flood Management. Because of the relatively snowless, mild winter, the usual winter-related Spring Flooding issues are not present. Ed Capone of the National Weather Service Northeast River Forecast Center (NERFC) in Taunton and Alan Dunham of the National Weather Service office in Taunton presented a briefing for the current flood outlook and some prior year examples showing snow pack and resultant spring flood conditions. Based on the light snowfall, Linda Hutchins, Hydrologist with the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation coordinated her presentation with a low flood threat and a review of this winter's hydrologic conditions.

PLEASE TAKE SHELTER SURVEY

As part of the statewide Mass Care and Shelter Initiative, an online survey has been developed to gather information from the public about how they would seek mass care and shelter during an emergency. The survey, which will go live on March 12th, will take about 5-10 minutes to complete and everyone is encouraged to participate. The survey can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3NV569L> or through a link posted on the MEMA website at www.mass.gov/mema. The survey will be live until March 23, 2012.

STATEWIDE WORKING GROUP PROJECTS

Mass Care Sheltering

MEMA, along with the MA Office on Disability, the MA Department of Public Health, the American Red Cross, and the five Homeland Security Regions, recently kicked off the statewide mass care and

shelter project. Under this initiative, response partners will collaborate to develop a statewide mass care and shelter plan to enhance coordination of mass care and shelter services across the Commonwealth. In addition to the statewide mass care and shelter plan, regional plans and a local template will be developed.

Evacuation

Members of the Evacuation Working Group attended the Mass Evacuation Conference hosted by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), and the National Governors Association (NGA) on February 8th and 9th in Fairfax, VA. Attendees represented a wide-range of government and non-profit entities with an interest in evacuation planning. The discussion focused on gaps in mass evacuation planning, in specific the need for a common framework of terms and guidance for local and state evacuation planning and response efforts. The proposed framework would aid state and local government in developing strategies, identify universal evacuation “trigger points” across jurisdictions, and standardize memoranda of understanding across jurisdictions and sectors to ease mass evacuations. The goal being to provide clear definitions of evacuation stages: pre-evacuation decision/warning, evacuation and sheltering, repopulation and provide a common language for evacuations across the country.

The Working Group recently learned through the Executive Office of Public Safety & Security (EOPSS) that they will be receiving a sizeable Homeland Security grant towards development of the comprehensive Statewide Evacuation Plan. The next meeting of the Evacuation Working Group will be held on March 5, 2012.

Children in Disasters

The next meeting of the Children in Disasters Working Group will be April 6th. The Workgroup continues to study the Commonwealth’s Emergency Management plans across all agencies, organizations, and municipalities, to identify gaps where the needs of children might not be met during disasters, as well as through the recovery process. Three areas of focus are Human Services, Emergency Management, and Pediatric Medical Care.

Animal Sheltering

The Statewide Animal Sheltering Working Group will be meeting on March 27, 2012 at MEMA HQ. Discussions will include: Updates on action plans that have been developed to address issues previously identified and review of tasking lists that have been formulated to assist in the monitoring and completion of ongoing action items.

IMAT

The Incident Management Assistance Teams Working Group is comprised of local, regional, and state subject matter experts including members of the Regional Homeland Security Councils and developing IMATs. Going forward, MEMA has awarded a planning contract to assist in the development of a Statewide All-Hazards Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) Strategy.

POST-DISASTER HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT FUNDS AVAILABLE

MEMA and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) have announced the availability of FEMA post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds. This post-disaster hazard mitigation grant funding is available as a result of the federal disaster declarations for the June 2011 tornadoes and Tropical Storm Irene in late August. Formal mitigation grant program briefings and technical assistance opportunities were held in February 2012 – the deadline for submission of HMGP applications is April 2, 2012. The grant briefings will provide an overview of the HMGP program, eligible activities, available funding and relevant application process/deadlines. Interested sub-applicants considering submission of an HMGP application are strongly encouraged to attend a scheduled briefing. Details regarding the grant program briefings are available on the 'Hazard Mitigation Grants' portion of the 'Disaster Recovery & Mitigation' section of the MEMA website at www.mass.gov/mema. Funding for hazard mitigation plans and projects can reduce overall risks to the population and structures, while also reducing the reliance on taxpayer-funded federal assistance

for disaster recovery. State & local governments, tribal organizations and certain private non-profits may be eligible to apply with projects that can include storm-water upgrades, drainage and culvert improvements, property acquisition, slope stabilization, infrastructure protection, seismic and wind retrofits, structure elevations, etc. This HMGP funding is available to all communities in the Commonwealth that meet the sub-applicant and project eligibility repair, replacement or deferred maintenance activities, but are designed to assist sub-applicants to develop long-term, cost-effective improvements that will reduce or eliminate risk/damage to people and property from the effects of natural hazards. Projects that address operation, deferred or future maintenance, repairs or replacement (without a change in the level of protection provided) of existing structures, facilities, or infrastructure (e.g., dredging, debris removal, replacement of obsolete utility systems, bridges and facility repair/rehabilitation) are not considered eligible mitigation grant activities.

OCTOBER NOR'EASTER FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

To date, all of the eligible applicants from the six counties which qualified for the FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Program due the October 29-30 Nor'easter, and subsequent Federal Disaster Declaration, have completed the Kick-off process. As the first reimbursement payments begin to be disseminated, the PA Program has obligated over \$1.6M.

TROPICAL STORM IRENE ASSISTANCE

689 individuals have been approved for Tropical Storm Irene aid with over \$5.4M distributed through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and 80 loans totaling \$3.4M through the Small Business Administration (SBA). FEMA's eGrant system has obligated \$12M to communities through its Public Assistance (PA) Program. Additional recovery details are available on the FEMA website at <http://www.fema.gov/news/event.fema?id=15596>.

TORNADO RECOVERY ONGOING

1,067 individuals have been approved and received \$4.6M in individual assistance through FEMA. The SBA has distributed 283 loans totaling \$16.7M. To date, FEMA's eGrant system has obligated 64% of the Project Worksheets, totaling over \$20.6M to communities for PA. Additional recovery information is available at <http://www.fema.gov/news/event.fema?id=14733>.

CRISIS COUNSELING CONTINUES FOR TORNADO SURVIVORS

Free crisis counseling continues to be available for residents of Hampden and Worcester counties who may be stressed, anxious or depressed due to the June 1st tornadoes. Those who want to take advantage of this confidential service may call (855) 915-8047, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The service is provided by the MA Department of Mental Health (MDMH) through their MassSupport Program and will be available through July 31, 2012. This service is funded by FEMA through a grant to MDMH.

MUTUAL AID UPDATE

To date, 210 Communities and Governmental Entities have opted into the Statewide Public Safety Mutual Aid Agreement, with 142 communities opting into the Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement. See the list at www.mass.gov/mema. MEMA continues to encourage all cities and towns to take advantage of this opportunity. Local officials with any questions regarding the Agreement should contact their MEMA Regional Office or Allen Phillips, MEMA Operations Manager at (508) 820-1426 or allen.phillips@state.ma.us.

MEMA VISITS FEMA

On March 8th, MEMA staff, led by Director Kurt Schwartz, was invited to tour FEMA's updated facilities at their Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) in Maynard, MA. FEMA's two-story underground 'bunker' serves a similar purpose, on the federal side, as MEMA's 'bunker' in

Framingham. The FEMA state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is a great model for MEMA, as the Agency moves forward to update the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) at MEMA HQ. In addition to the improvements in technology at the RRCC, the staff was able to inspect the cadre of impressive MERS Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) equipment. This has everything 'on-wheels' ready to be dispatched around the nation during a disaster, from highly sophisticated mobile command and communication centers, water filtration systems, communication towers, to mounted generators large enough to light up a small town. It was a very enlightening and informative experience.

NATIONAL FLOOD SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK

FEMA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are once again partnering for National Flood Safety Awareness Week, March 12 -16. This is a time for individuals, families, businesses and communities to understand their risk for flooding and take precautions to protect their families and homes in the event of flooding. "Floods can happen at any time, anywhere across the United States, which means we all need to be prepared now," said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. "There are simple steps everyone can take to prepare for flooding, such as developing a family emergency plan, having an emergency supply kit and protecting your home or business from flooding by obtaining a flood insurance policy." Floods are one of the most common hazards in the United States, however not all floods are alike. Floods typically occur when too much rain falls or snow melts too quickly. While some floods develop slowly, flash floods develop suddenly. Hurricanes can bring flooding to areas far inland from where they first hit the coast, as we witnessed last year from the devastating impacts of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. And chunks of ice from a thawing river can block its normal flow and force water out of its banks. For more on this article, go to www.mass.gov/mema.

2012 STATE OF FEMA REPORT

In 2011, together with their many partners across the whole community, FEMA responded to a record setting year of disasters, provided assistance to help communities all over the Nation with their grant programs, and helped lead the way toward a National Preparedness Goal—a national vision of preparedness for how the nation will work together to approach our shared risk. FEMA presents the *2012 State of FEMA Report* which captures the highlights of accomplishments for the year, laying out who FEMA is and provided a vision for where FEMA is going. The *Report* also shows how utilizing the "whole community" has allowed collaboration with our partners to better prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards. FEMA hopes that as you read through the document you will also see that a premium is placed on maximizing the value of the appropriations Congress has provided and that, through effective planning and execution, FEMA has been a good steward of the taxpayers' dollars. The *2012 State of FEMA Report* also shows how much more there is to do. For the *Report*, go to http://www.fema.gov/about/state_of_fema/index.shtm.

FEMA'S COLLABORATION COMMUNITY

FEMA's Collaboration Community is for FEMA stakeholders to have a dialogue about emergency preparedness, disaster response and recovery, and other emergency management topics at <http://fema.ideascale.com>. To participate, click *Register* or *Sign In* in the top right corner. If you don't want to create an IdeaScale profile, you can submit your topics and comments via e-mail at FEMA-New-Media@dhs.gov.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION UPDATES PROMOTES MAYDAY ACTIVITIES

Each year, archives, libraries, museums, and arts and historic preservation organizations set aside May 1st to participate in *MayDay*, an initiative to protect cultural heritage from disasters. *MayDay* is designed to inspire cultural institutions to take one simple step each year to protect the art, artifacts, records, and historic sites held in their trust. Last year *MayDay* participants held fire safety sessions

for staff and volunteers, stockpiled emergency supplies, and started or updated disaster plans. The *Heritage Preservation Update* website contains more information and great ideas about *MayDay*: http://www.heritagepreservation.org/PROGRAMS/TFlessons/MayDay.html?utm_source=Heritage+Preservation+Master+List&utm_campaign=74d126c101-Update+Winter+2012&utm_medium=email.

NEDRIX WINTER CONFERENCE

The Northeast Disaster Recovery Information X-Change (NEDRIX) is hosting their first 2012 conference on March 14th, in Quincy, MA. This one-day event will focus on the current national landscape of Cyber Threats and Security with presentations in the morning from industry professionals and a Simulation Exercise in the afternoon. This conference event will be collaborative and interactive providing a great venue to learn and share valuable information. For addition details and registration information, go to http://nedrix.com/registration_attendee2.php.

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